

Representative Lisa Subeck's Maiden Speech

“Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I offer this amendment today because as elected Representatives one of our first duties – a duty that we are sworn to honor and uphold – is to uphold the Constitution of this State and of the United States of America.

The First Amendment is a fundamental right guaranteed to all citizens, ensuring that every citizen's right to free speech and to petition their government, in this case us, and it is a key part of our job as elected officials to make sure we hear their voices. There is no more important place than right here, in our own house of government, for citizens to petition us as their representatives.

It is incomprehensible to me that citizens may bring guns into this chamber, but they cannot bring a simple sign expressing their views on the issues on which we are voting, the issues on which we are making critical decisions. If one values the 2nd amendment, you must also value the 1st amendment. You must value the rights of our constituents.

I'm new to my current role in this body, but I have spent a fair amount of time in this building talking to you and others about issues, coming to hearings, voicing my concerns and I have seen time and again people being turned away for a simple sign, something no bigger than 8 ½ x 11 inches. A small piece of paper, turned away and not allowed to bring that into these meetings, not allowed to express their views.

I understand past concerns that large signs could be disruptive, and that's why for this amendment I have only asked that people be allowed to carry an 8 ½ x 11 sign – no bigger than a sheet of computer paper.

This issue is incredibly important to my constituents here in Dane County who come to this building every day to have their voices heard and that is why I offer this amendment. This is a simple change, and by passing this amendment we would be sending a clear message to our constituents. A message that we respect their 1st Amendment rights, that we will stand up and uphold and protect their first amendment rights. We value their voices and that we want to hear their voices on the floor of this body.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me, stand up for 1st amendment rights of all of our constituents and vote no on tabling.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.”